

# Nation

Volume 10, No. 26 • November 14, 2003

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# VICTORY

The recent victory of a Metis hunter in Ontario, establishing the Supreme Court's opinion that the Metis have the full rights of Aboriginal people in Canada takes me back more than 30 years to my first contacts with Metis leaders in Albert and the West.

For many generations, isolated Metis leaders had been struggling to defend the legacy of Gabriel Dumont and Louis Riel against the entrenched indifference of most Canadian authorities. In 1970, as a touring reporter with *The Montreal Star*, I met the leaders of the Metis in Alberta, who were trying to establish a strong province-wide association to defend their rights. Provincial leader was the incomparable Stan Daniels, a middle-aged former construction worker; his sidekick was the younger and better-educated Tony Belcourt, who is still active in Ontario, and was seen on TV this week rejoicing over the most recent victory.

I took an immediate liking to Stan Daniels, who had fallen into politics when he had been confronted with trying to find a defence for a member of his family who was charged with a serious crime. When he saw how the system operated for Metis people, he figured he should do something about it. Later, Stan gained national attention when he walked from Alberta to Ottawa with a sausage to dramatize the extraordinary food prices being charged to northern people.

Twenty years later, when on another safari through Aboriginal communities across Canada, I visited the small community of Kelly Lake, near the Alberta-B.C. border. There I met 70-year-old Francis Belcourt, worn out after a lifetime as a trapper, whose family had moved from Red River following the Riel Rebellion, to Lac Ste-Anne in Alberta, to Grande Prairie, and to Kelly lake in 1915. Somehow they never quite managed to keep ahead of the incoming white settlers. Kelly Lake was full of people bearing traditional Metis names – Calliou, Gladu, L'Hirondelle, Letendre. "We trapped wolves, coyotes, foxes, lynx, marten, fisher, wolverine, squirrels, weasels, otter, beaver, muskrat," Francis told me, his eyes gleaming with pleasure at the memories. In those days, with plenty of fur-bearing animals, the trappers could make twice the average Depression-era wage of \$150 a month.

But from the 1970s, with new gas, oil and coal fields moving in all around them,

the new service town of Tumbler Ridge being build nearby, and the new service roads opening up Kelly Lake to the outside world, the animals had been frightened away and trapping had now almost been wiped out. Twenty years before, Kelly Lake had 350 people; but by 1990 it was down to 150. Young people had to leave if they wanted to work. Only one of the Belcourts' 11 children was still living at home, the others living in small towns, doing all sorts of ordinary Canadian jobs. "They know they are part-Indian," said Francis, of his children, "but that's about it."

The victory won in court this week follows many in which Metis hunters and trappers have been charged for offences under white Canadian laws that it is now established should never have applied to them. In my book *People of Terra Nullius*, I talk about George Belmore, a member of the Saugeen band of Ojibway in northern Ontario, was nevertheless not a status Indian under the Indian Act. He spoke Ojibway, understood little English, was literate only in Oji-Cree syllabics, and when taken to court had to speak through an interpreter. He took his 12-year-old grandson out in a canoe to teach him about the traditions of his people by hunting for ducks that were to be used for ceremonial purposes. Their settlement, Allanwater Bridge, had previously been placed under surveillance by officials of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, who arrested Belmore and later two of his adult sons for "unlawfully hunting birds in contravention of the Migratory Birds Convention Act."

Belmore told the court that if the feast for which the birds had been hunted were not held, "the result would be the decline of game in the territory." This feast is one of the means by which Ojibway people manage the stock of wildlife resources on which they have depended for generations. Belmore's lawyer, Andrew Chapeskie, of Kenora, in presenting this case to an international conference, said he had been forced to the conclusion that there was so little understanding in the Euro-legal system of Aboriginal methods of wildlife management that it was hardly worth taking such cases to court.

This recent case seems to suggest that the legal system is at last awakening to more sensitive evaluation of Aboriginal methods and needs.

note: Boyce article was edited for space. Full text can be seen at Boyce Richardson's website: [www.magma.ca/~brich/index.html](http://www.magma.ca/~brich/index.html)

By Boyce Richardson

the Nation

# CONTENTS

## NEWS

- 5 15 Years and Going Dog CLSC
- 7 Mist Crime New Weapons

## BRIEFS

- Consumer watch Mist Police files

## FEATURE

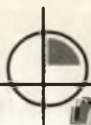
- 10 Geneva
- 15 Junior Rangers
- 19 Walking
- 23 Xavier

## ON THE COVER

Ted Moses and Boris Jackman

Photo: Will Nicholls  
Design: Mona Laviolette





## THE COMING OF AGE....

Many of us go through various stages of life, some happy, some sad, some serious, some funny. Of all the various stages of my life, none struck me as much as when I left home to go to school down south. Every fall, as I can recall, we would all go out to see big brothers, sisters, uncles and future aunts disappear on a plane to go to the fabled land of high schools. Upon their return the next summer (some never came back or returned as old folks) our families were introduced to strange individuals who had long hair and wore clothing that we could laugh at (only if we dared, because these guys were much bigger than us). Jimi Hendrix and Woodstock were apparently legendary topics discussed in bars and parties (whatever they were, we knew nothing of those things) and seemed to be way out of our league. Even the slurred words of Bob Dylan were only appreciated in its musical overtones. What ever it was, it signalled a change in our perspective of the world as we knew it.

The coming of age for my class, when the time came to be our turn, instilled secret fears of change and yet was exciting at the same time. We weren't heading out to some northern, suburban backwater, we were heading for the nation's capital, Ottawa. As we arrived, we quickly checked out the chicks, to discover that there were many, many of them, and sometimes, choices were hard to make. For some reason, as all high school movies ever made pointed glaringly and loudly, there were only a few girls that everyone wanted, so competition was fierce and rowdy.

The time for change was upon us, as we quickly discovered on a routine visit to the after school hang out proved. You see, we hung out at the friendship centre in Ottawa and it was easy to get to, right next to the bus lanes, just off Parliament Hill and next to the world's longest skating rink, the Rideau Canal. We arrived at the centre to discover that the manager had left his keys inside. He dangerously decided to break a small window and access the handle. We were just going to enter the building when a whole swarm of cop cars and men with long coats called us down with their guns drawn. Whoa!

The manager tried to explain his situation and I wondered, where did these guys come from? It was only a matter of sec-

onds that the police arrived after the glass was broken and I quickly deduced that those people who always seemed to be making out every evening in front of the centre were undercover RCMP and not gays. In fact, they were cops. We were quizzed on whether we were AIM members and we asked in return who was AIM? That got us in a lot of trouble and many questions later, as the president of the centre arrived a while later we were released from quite possibly an ill fate. Meanwhile, a crowd had arrived and I wondered just exactly who those police thought we were.

I knew that native people in Canada were not considered to be much of a threat to national security, except for that time when a near riot erupted when the monthly money ration arrived an hour late at another school in La Macaza and we whispered about in the school halls. We heard of a guy (who I now know) who had chained himself to the school printing press (he obviously wasn't printing the King James version of the Bible). I knew of guys who hung out at the Blue Angel and cavorted until the wee hours of the morning and we were already exposed to *Little Big Man*. We heard of another guy who claimed to be a nephew of Jay Silverheels (Tonto, for those of you who don't know much), but I didn't know of any group of people who warranted so much scrutiny from the law. That got me to thinking and asking questions. That's when I heard and learned about politics. That was a turning point in my life that I can still remember clearly. Other memories, if I can remember them, just don't cut it when it came to making me think of whom I am.

Another coming of age was when the dams were built in the north, just around the time our communities were adjusting to rock & roll and loud, loud music. I went to many concerts in the south, and compliments of Indian Affairs, we got free tickets to every concert that had a venue at the Civic Centre. We saw Frank Zappa (who had a profound effect on my understanding of the universe), The Who, Kiss, Led Zeppelin, Rod Stewart, just about every artist we ever heard on the old jukebox back home performed for our decibel-demented ears.

Today, we are at a new coming of age for the Eeyou Nation. I just hope that I can remember this one clearly.

*The Nation*  
is published every two weeks  
by Beesum Communications

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INDIVIDUALS & INSTITUTIONS: \$45

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PAYABLE TO BEESUM COMMUNICATIONS

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PUBLICATION MAIL #40015005

ISSN #1206-2642

THE NATION IS A MEMBER OF:

THE JAMES BAY CREE COMMUNICATIONS SOCIETY, CIRCLE OF  
ABORIGINAL CONTROLLED PUBLISHERS, CANADIAN MAGAZINE  
PUBLISHERS ASSN.

QUEBEC COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER ASSN.  
CANADIAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS' ASSN.  
LES HEBDOS SELECT DU QUÉBEC

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE  
GOVERNMENT OF CANADA, THROUGH THE CANADA MAGAZINE  
FUND TO OUR EDITORIAL COSTS

*The Nation*



# PETRO FRIENDS CELEBRATE PARTNERSHIPS



only the evolution of a business, but also the evolution of a partnership," said Moses.

Moses made an allusion between the signing of the Paix des Braves and the partnership between the Crees and Petronor. He said, "Previous conflicts have been put aside as we found we could focus on a terrain of mutual interest and co-operation which has come to be a far vaster terrain than perhaps either of us could have imagined." Moses added that in the past Crees were systematically excluded from economic development. He said the Crees are entering into economic relationships as equals but that, "We will not be able to do this alone. We will need honest, committed and forward looking partners – partners like Petro Canada to lend a hand. Moses said that respect was a big part of the Cree way of life and partners like Petro Canada realized that.

When Besuam Petroleum and Cree Energy merged to become Petronor, it was a whole new ballgame. Grand Chief Ted Moses said that it was only good business sense that led to the merger. It also led to Petro Canada and Petronor holding a gala event in Montreal on October 29th to celebrate their new and ongoing relationship.

An enthusiastic Petro-Canada V.P. Boris Jackman said he was stealing a page from David Letterman with the 10 top reasons to "celebrate our partnership." Jackman said Petro Canada was pleased to be celebrating 15 years of partnership with the Crees of James Bay and they always had a unique relationship with the aboriginal peoples. Petro Canada is committed to a long-term relationship with the Crees and the benefits are mutual. Jackman said the Cree understand what the word partnership means and praised the Cree for their "vision and courage." Jackman said the main reason why Petro Canada was glad to partner with the Crees was "because we like and respect you."

Moses told the audience Crees started with modest resources and infrastructure and after going through growing pains achieved a successful joint enterprise. "We are today celebrating not

When asked about oil or gas exploration in Eeyou Istchee, Jackman said there are no plans yet, but if something should look good they would be willing to partner with the Crees on that aspect of the petroleum business also.

Moses told the *Nation* this partnership means an end of rivalries between Cree companies and this led to redefining the relationship with Petro Canada. Moses said the exclusivity of working with Petro Canada would help out both. Moses was referring to the SEBJ deal that Petronor has for the EM-1 project. "This means a bigger market, bigger growth and bigger profits for everyone," said Moses.

The surprise of the evening came when federal Liberal MP Guy St. Julien said he was pleased at the partnership between the two companies. He just wished that his government would give the same amount of respect to the Crees. St. Julien called upon the feds to respect the JBNQA. "The South says there is no homeless in the Cree communities but there are 16-22 people in the same house. There are 6-7 kids in one room. I've told my government they should look at the Cree reality. They should visit the communities in the North," said St. Julien.

By Will Nicholls

## Free dog clinics

Free spay and neutering clinics for dogs will be held at the fire halls in Nemaska and Waskaganish the first week of December. They are being put on by The International Fund for Animal Welfare and The World Society for the Protection of Animals.

Representatives of the two groups were in Waswanipi, Ouje Bougoumou and Mistissini last January holding workshops on more humane methods of dog control. This round of clinics is designed to reduce the number of unwanted dogs in the communities in the future. Many of these stray dogs are sick or injured, cold and hungry. As a result, they end up attacking people.



Spaying is a simple surgery that removes the female reproductive organs; while neutering is the removal of the male testicles. The dog is put under anaesthetic for the procedure and recovers within a week. Pain is usually minimal. It is considered an effective and humane method for controlling the dog population.

There are many other benefits to spaying and neutering your dogs: it helps them live longer, healthier lives; it prevents some kinds of cancers; it makes pets better, more affectionate companions; spaying a dog eliminates her heat cycle, thereby not staining carpets and furniture; neutering makes dogs less likely to roam the neighbourhood, run away, get into fights with other dogs and attack people; it reduces the number of homeless dogs that get into trash containers, defecate in public areas or on private lawns, frighten people and scare away or kill birds and wildlife.

The procedure does not affect a dog's natural instinct to protect the home and family, or to hunt. Call your local fire hall in Namaska or Waskaganish for further information.



# GATHERING OF NATIONS CUP

## First Nations Memorial Tournament

Abenaki — Algonquin — Atikamekw — Cree — Huron  
Inuit — Malecite — Micmac — Mohawk — Montagnais  
Naskapi — Ojibway — Cree of Northern Ontario

The "Paix de Braves" agreement between the Quebec government and the Crees strengthens the political, economic and social relations between Quebec and the Crees, and is characterized by cooperation, partnership and mutual respect. This agreement promotes the emergence of Cree expertise in economic development and job creation, while providing economic spin-offs for the Cree and the population of Quebec in general. It is obvious that the new agreement was a result of a rapid action-response procedure that was designed on a political platform which ultimately granted us economic sovereignty. But believe the Cree-Quebec agreement is not just political in nature, but a cultural and social agreement as well. While working as the assistant to Chief Robert Kitchen of Waswanipi, I envisioned a youth project that would offer a hockey tournament while showcasing our cultural identity as First Nations to the non-native people of Quebec.

What makes this Gathering of Nations Cup First Nations Memorial Tournament unique is that we have former NHL Coach of the Year Ted Nolan acting as our spokesperson. Alongside the usual categories of Class A, B, C, Women's Hockey and Broomball, we will introduce a new category titled "Nations." The Nations category will have a maximum of 10 Nation teams, each composed of aboriginal status players. For example, our Cree Nation team would include our best players available from the nine Cree communities and play against teams of Abenaki, Atikamekw, Algonquin, Huron, Inuit, Mohawk, Montagnais, Malecite, Mi'kmaq, Naskapi, Ojibway and Cree of Northern Ontario. We will use the same tournament format that is used at international tournaments such as the World Championships. This is a nation-to-nation hockey competition, and we will soon begin assembling our Cree Nation Men's Hockey Team.

Other tournament objectives include a display of Cultural Activities and Traditional Knowledge Workshops, First Nations Flag Contest, Healing & Wellness Workshops, Gala Event Opening Ceremonies and Special Guest Appearances. We have extended invitations to current NHL players such as Jonathan Cheechoo, Jordin Tootoo, Chris Simon, and to former NHL aboriginal players such as Bryan Trottier, Reggie Leach, Gino Odjick and John Chabot. Susan Aglukark and Don Burnstick are available and willing to attend.

On November 25, a consultation meeting will be held with Ted Nolan. The main intent is to seek support from the First Nation Chiefs and Mayors of the Inuit Nation of Quebec in making this Youth project a reality. The Gathering of Nations Cup First Nations Memorial Tournament is scheduled for April 2004, but the place and exact dates will be announced within the next few weeks. It is with pleasure I announce that the late Mark Petawabano will be awarded the inaugural First Nations Memorial Trophy, to be presented to his parents during the Gala Evening Opening Ceremonies. Above all, this tournament is a memorial gathering to remember our loved ones who have gone before us, and to honour those who have excelled in their professions.

The Council of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation has been instrumental in providing their support. Two people who deserve special mention for their belief, understanding and support are Randy Bosum, Ouje-Bougoumou Youth Development Coordinator, and Naomi Bosum, Youth Chief of Ouje-Bougoumou Youth Council. Please show your support by sending your comments to gathering\_of\_nations@hotmail.com. An official website will soon be launched, and check out future issues of the Nation for more information. Thank you for your support.

Leonard Matthews, Founder  
Gathering of Nations Cup  
First Nations Memorial Tournament



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# RISE IN CRIME IN MISTISSINI

Briefs



Mistissini has seen a steady rise in violent criminal acts over the last 10 years.

Shootings are becoming commonplace in this bustling community of over 3,000 people.

As reported in *The Nation* last May, two local men Eric Meskino, and Clifford Joly, went on a shooting rampage that lasted a combined 15 hours, and resulted in over 130 rounds being unloaded in various buildings around the community. One volunteer firefighter was slightly injured as a result. Since then, there have been 13 other gun-related incidents in the community. These include suicide attempts, domestic disputes, and unlawful discharge of a firearm.

One of the big problems, according to Police Chief Calvin Blacksmith, is that perpetrators are treated leniently.

"I think that the police are doing the best job they can, but when the justice system chooses to put these people back into the community rather than keep them in jail, that causes increased stress for the police, knowing that they'll have to deal with similar incidents from the same people in the near future," said Blacksmith.

One thing that has been discussed in recent years is going back to the old way of doing things. When an individual does something to harm the community, some believe they should do as their forefathers did and banish that person from the community.

One of the largest problems in the community is alcohol. "Alcohol is the flame that ignites the anger inside of some people," said Blacksmith. Some of the shooting incidents are a result of people who feel mistreated, get intoxicated, and then use

their gun to try to get even with those who have hurt them.

A lot of the problems within the community stem from how kids are treated growing up, according to Dorothy Nicholls, the Vice Principal of Voyageur Memorial school. This translates into poor results in school.

"Some students have been in the same grade for two or three years. Out of 226 students, only 60 attend on a

regular basis," she said. "I think the students are frustrated with the curriculum and feel it's not up to par at times. After awhile, all they see is failure, these are some of the things that we hope to correct in the near future."

The frustration that these students feel tends to come out through bullying other kids. Workshops are now being given in all nine communities to properly deal with bullying.

There is also a lack of planned activities in the community for the youth. Hockey is thriving, but aside from that there is very little to do for those kids who aren't interested in playing sports.

"It's fine to say the police should make more arrests or be more strict, but I think the parents have to take a huge role in being responsible for the youth. I don't think there's enough supervision of the youth. That, coupled with being idle due to lack of activities sometimes leads to drugs and alcohol," she said.

"Family members have to be responsible and work together. Leaving the responsibility solely to the police or to the school is not a good idea, it doesn't work that way. They (the kids) are not being raised, they're trying to raise themselves."

Joe Neeposh runs the Reception Centre which serves as a home for youth that are in trouble with the law. He thinks that the community as a whole has to deal with these problems, and rely less on the police. "I think the public has to get together and discuss it at a general assembly," he says.

"It's too big a problem for just the police to deal with, it should be a community effort."

By Steve Bonspiel

## Mistissini Police equipped with Swat Team-like weapons

Criminals in Mistissini beware; the police are soon to be equipped with weapons that are traditionally used by SWAT teams.

These weapons are the latest tools in crime fighting on Native reserves. The weapons include a bean bag gun, a taser gun, and what is known as an Arwin, a weapon that launches 40-millimetre rubber bullets.

Police have yet to be certified for usage of these weapons, but it shouldn't be very



much longer before they are, said Mistissini Police Chief Calvin Blacksmith.

"There were some people who thought that we shouldn't have these types of weapons, that they should only be available to swat teams, but we feel that they will help the officers when dealing with people who won't listen to reason and have to be taken down by force."

The main reason the police requested these new weapons was to reduce the time between when the crime occurs and when it is brought to a halt. Last May's shooting incidents could have been dealt with in a more efficient manner if these weapons were available to the police, said Blacksmith.

With them, the police won't have to wait for the SWAT team to arrive from Chibougamau before they can act.

"These weapons do not project deadly force, so by using them we will be able to stop the incident quickly, with minimal harm done to neither the public nor the assailant," said Blacksmith.

In other communities, these weapons have proven to be highly effective in neutralizing criminals, and ending armed conflicts in the safest manner possible.



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*the Nation's*

## 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue

**the passage of time...**

**The Nation** has been a part of Cree life for 10 years. It has given a voice to the people. We have always been dedicated to reflecting and maintaining the Cree language and culture. The Nation's particular mix of news briefs, investigative reporting, and humorous personal editorials and traditional stories keeps the Cree in touch with one another—giving you all of the information you need on what everyone's talking about.

**This very special issue of the Nation will be a collector's item.**

We will be featuring stories on Cree Visionaries and Trailblazers such as Annie Whiskeychan, stories that have touched our hearts and challenged our intellect, stories that have had an impact on our lives and brought our communities together...

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## Consumer watch in Cree Land



When a native spends a great amount of hard-earned money in a non-Native business, he should expect to be treated with the respect and the customer service entitled to anyone who brings livelihood to a business. That is what Kevin Gunner of Waswanipi thought when he walked in Gagnon & Frères in Chibougamau to buy a \$2,500 computer.

After having troubles with the monitor at home, however, he was told to bring it back the following day. But once there, he was told to bring the tower in to get checked too. He asked if a technician could come to his house instead to fix the problem, since it's a long drive back and forth.

He phoned the owner, André Sasseville, who was, according to Gunner, quite upset to be disturbed during his supper. Gunner says Sasseville told him that they don't go to Waswanipi for service. Gunner explained that he thought he was getting service as well when he bought the computer. But Gunner says Sasseville replied to bring back the computer and that he would give him his money back and – in a very rude way – not to set foot in his store again.

So the system was brought back the next day. They fixed the problem and gave Gunner choice to still keep the machine or take the refund. He took the cash and while leaving, warned Sasseville that this story would be told to other natives. Gunner says Sasseville told him not to come back.

When the Nation asked him about the incident, Sasseville said that he was always polite with Gunner.

"I even offered to pay for his gas to bring back the tower," said Sasseville. "It is not in my interest to be rude to clients, they are my livelihood. And I don't care if they're white, Native or Chinese, I'm here to offer the best service. When he choose the reimbursement and left, I told him to come back, that his business was important to me and I would give him a deal. He left happy."

To this day Sasseville says he does not understand quite what happened.

"I feel sorry for the guy," Gunner says of Sasseville. "He denies everything. If I see him around, I'll be polite; I'll talk to him. But he has to know not to treat native people this way."

A good piece of advice to all consumers out there is to read the fine print when purchasing equipment and to ask all the questions before signing on the dotted line. Get all promises in writing and added to the sales contract. Surprises and aggravations are often avoided that way.

## MISTISSINI POLICE FILE

Occurrences-October 20 to November 2

### 19 October

**Careless Use of a Firearm** – At 6:01 am police received a call of shots fired. Two shots were heard coming from near the track and field facility. A minute later police received another call of three shots fired at Sunset Street. Five individuals were seen fleeing the scene. Investigation and evidence gathering led to three arrests of minors, who cannot to be named. That evening a fourth suspect was arrested and the firearm recovered – 12-gauge pump action shotgun. All individuals were charged with discharging a firearm. Court date March 10, 2004.

### 22 October

**Arson** – At 10:45 am five minors were setting gasoline on fire behind a shed. Investigation revealed that suspects put out the grass fire prior to arrival of police. No charges in this incident.

**Break and Enter** – During the night of the 21<sup>st</sup> / 22<sup>nd</sup>, there was a break and enter at the Youth Center. Suspects forced open a window and \$900 was stolen from one of the desks in the office. Under Investigation.

A second **B & E** took place at 5:17 pm at 72 Wabushush where people were trying to break in while the cleaning lady was present. Information revealed this was the fifth occurrence at this residence - a Cree School Board Unit. Under investigation.

### 23 October 2003

**Possession of Narcotics and prevention** – At 5:56 am police were called to a house on Queen Street. Suspect arrived home under the influence and tried to possess a firearm. A bystander alertly took charge of the firearm and police arrived on scene. Suspect was found to have 3.95 grams of what appeared to be marijuana. One person charged with possession. Awaiting information (confirmation of tests on substance) prior to naming suspect. In connection with the same incident a second suspect was being questioned regarding willfully breaking a window. Suspect is a minor.

**Suicide Intervention** – At 7:45 am police were called to a youth on the street with a knife threatening suicide. Suspect dropped knife when ordered by police. There were numerous calls over a couple days regarding this youth and suicide. Social Services contacted for intervention as well.

**Breach of Undertaking** – One of the suspects charged in the incident of October 19<sup>th</sup> was out at 1:49 am violating the curfew set at 11:00 pm. Under investigation.

### 27 October

**Break and Enter** – Overnight October 26<sup>th</sup> / 27<sup>th</sup> - police were called to go to the Municipal Garage. A small window on

the garage door had been broken out and suspects gained access. There was no sign of theft – suspects spray painted the lights of a pickup, a truck and the wall at the shed. As well they spray-painted the billboard at Main and Queen Streets. Under investigation.

### 28 October

**Break and Enter** – Police were called by Washequin Airways to report entrance being gained to the Municipal Garage. Access was gained by prying open the lock on a window at the back of the building. Cheques and other papers returned to police. Under investigation – no charges.

**Assault with a weapon** – 9:30 pm – Under investigation – to be reported later.

**Mischief** – Ashley Iserhoff contacted police to advise that a window had been broken at CINI-FM. A search of area revealed no sign of suspect. Under investigation.

### 31 October

**Failure to comply with conditions** – a minor was out after curfew – failing to comply with release.

**Impaired Driving** – Suspect stole father's vehicle to joy ride around community of Mistissini. Police intervened and stopped vehicle. Suspect was under the influence of alcohol. Charged with one count of Impaired Driving and also Driving without a license. Is a Minor (cannot be named)

**Firearms Incident** – a fifth minor was charged in connection with the firearms incident of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Out after curfew – failing to comply with release.

**Assault** – A 56 year old man was beaten – bloody nose and swollen eyes and nose at 8:20 in the morning. His son has been questioned concerning this incident.

### 1 November

**Break and Enter** – Cini-FM called to report that several windows at the station had been broken and other damages. No suspects yet nor other damages.

### PREVENTION

R.I.D.E. checks were also completed with 45 vehicles being stopped. No charges were laid in connection with these checks.

Halloween activities of Trick or Treat were postponed from October 31<sup>st</sup> to Saturday November 1<sup>st</sup> from 1:00 – 4:00 pm for community safety due to threats issued and weather. This decision was made by the Police and Public Safety offices in conjunction with the Office of the Deputy Chief. The majority of community members interacted with approved of the idea of daytime trick or treating.





# *Eight Days in Geneva*

*In which The Nation's intrepid reporter gets bogged down in acronyms, lost luggage and expensive taxicabs*

*By Donald Nicholls*

**W**e grow up thinking of the United Nations as a magnanimous body representing justice and equality, one that protects our fundamental human rights when governments fail to do so. The first image we see is the warm light blue colours on the flags, signs and berets. And when dealing in human or Indigenous rights all roads eventually lead to Geneva. Since 1982 and the creation of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), Native groups from around the globe have made a pilgrimage each summer to this city set in the Swiss Alps to testify about the atrocities and violations inflicted upon them by governments, large corporations and organizations.

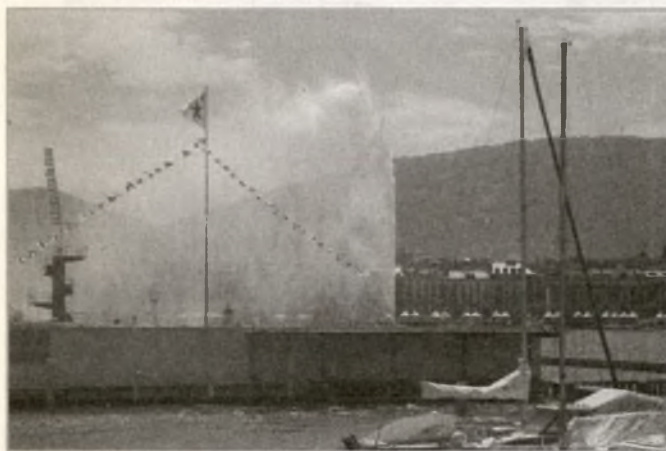


Geneva is a beautiful city, set on a beautiful lake with fountains springing up everywhere, all to the backdrop of soaring mountains. In fact, just outside of Geneva is the famous Mont Blanc, where they grow those expensive pens. Yes, it is also one of the most expensive European cities to visit. To give you an idea, when I ordered a cab, the meter was already at \$18 before we left my hotel. In Europe, it did not take long to master the trains and buses.

Geneva is a beautiful city,  
set on a beautiful lake with fountains  
springing up everywhere

I arrived in Geneva with the clothes on my back. It would be a day or so before my luggage would catch up with me. The first day, I made my way down the hill from my hotel to the main entrance of the Palais des Nations (United Nations). In front of the gates is a huge wooden chair, maybe three or four stories high, and missing a leg. It is a monument to the international campaign against the use of land mines and in remembrance of those who have lost lives or limbs. This would explain the missing leg.

After going through security to get my pass for the week, I noticed that many international organizations, thousands really, are all around the UN. With my pass in hand, I walked through the front gates. There are rows upon rows of flags from every country in the world who are members of the UN. It is amazing to stroll down the main pathway between these flags, all the while approaching the entrance of what looks like a palace. I worked my way through a number of UN buildings and stairwells until I made it to the room where this session of the Working Group would be held. Being a seasoned UN veteran since my New York experience, instead of going right in, I turned the corner and proceeded to the coffee break area. Immediately I spotted a table of good friends who had stepped out for a coffee or cigarette.



A city of fountains

After a few minutes of getting caught up, we went into the meeting room where groups were already making presentations. I quickly gathered materials deposited on the tables at the back of the room. These papers not only highlight the presentations, they go beyond to direct you to more detailed information the Indigenous groups cannot fit into the meager time they are allotted to speak. However, the presenters at these forums are quickly becoming masters of the system and know that the vocal presentations only whet the appetite of those truly concerned with the issues. There will be those who will come by and draw you out into the coffee break area to engage in real discourse. But for



Donald Nicholls from Mistissini  
participated with the Working Group  
on Indigenous Populations

now, I find a seat in the main chambers, put on my headphones, turn the dial to English, and let out a small sigh – I'm back.

First let me give you a brief history about the 21st Session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP). The WGIP is a United Nations body comprised of five experts from the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. This year was particularly important for the WGIP as the Economic and Social Council would decide its future. On the agenda for July 23 was the General Secretary's Report on all existing mechanisms within the UN concerning Indigenous matters. This would include the newly created Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Office of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties of Indigenous People, created in 2001, and the Working Group created in 1982. This year's theme was Indigenous Peoples and Globalization. The proposal of creating a Second Decade of Indigenous Peoples will also be brought before the UN General Assembly as it is felt by Indigenous leaders and organizations much of what was proposed for the decade remains unfinished – namely, the adoption of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Caucus statements are more  
representative of the widespread  
concerns and seriousness of issues  
impacting Indigenous communities  
throughout the world.

The Indigenous Caucus is another part of the Geneva experience. At each session of the Working Group or Permanent Forum, the Indigenous people present, gather, and form a body known as the Indigenous Caucus. The reason is simple – it allows the Indigenous delegates to unite and discuss issues common to them all and make statements before the UN bodies as a collective. Caucus statements are more representative of the widespread concerns and seriousness of issues impacting Indigenous communities throughout the world. It creates a stronger voice, hopefully translating into more attention by governments to these issues.

This year at the Indigenous Caucus, we discussed: a) the possible shutting down of the WGIP; b) the state of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; c) the collective statement on the impacts of globalization; d) the issue of allowing





Kenneth Deer is Mohawk from Kahnawake and was part of the Working Group

academics who work closely with tribes to have a voice in the Caucus meetings, and e) the structure of the Caucus. The strength, and sometimes the point of contention within the Indigenous Caucus, is each Indigenous group is at a different stage of development or realization of their rights. This is a strength as one group can provide support and encouragement for another. It is a problem at times as advancing a collective statement can lead to generic language which does not necessarily recognize the differences between the situation of Indigenous peoples in developing and developed countries.

At the 21st Session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, John Sinclair, the Canadian Senior Assistant Deputy


Minister of Indian Affairs, delivered the representation on behalf of Canada. Sinclair highlighted the need for more detailed databases on Indigenous concerns throughout the world. Also, he spoke of the conference on Aboriginal Policy Research Canada funded last year and pointed out Minister Robert Nault had set up a National Working Group on Education. The principle mandate for this Group was to address the gap between the quality of education non-natives and natives receive in Canada. The Group's recommendations called for an education system grounded in Indigenous knowledge and for those Aboriginals who are highly educated to return to their communities. Also, the Canadian government has committed \$600 million over the next five years to provide Aboriginal communities with clean, safe drinking water.


The Government of Canada further believes the key to Native women's rights is to address concerns of matrimonial property on reserves in the event of a divorce. This will be the focus of the Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights in Canada, to study the issue of matrimonial property as an abrogation of human

The principle mandate for this Group was to address the gap between the quality of education non-natives and natives receive in Canada.

rights. Of course, this issue brings up concerns; land on reservations is communally owned (by the whole First Nation), when we start becoming private owners then the land loses its protection. So, policies would have to reflect assets or allocated housing on reservations – not real property.

Sinclair said the Canadian government is also firmly committed to addressing issues of non-compliance with historic treaties with





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the First Nations in Canada. So, they will give more power to the treaty commissions and set up more offices in the provinces to specifically deal with treaties. This leaves me to wonder, who exactly do they think is in violation of the treaties? Perhaps, investing money into fulfilling treaty obligations and complying with Section 35 of the Constitution is on next year's agenda.



Adelard Blackman from the Buffalo River Dene Nation from Saskatchewan is launching a petition against Canada for failure to live up to their treaty obligations

The Government of Canada further stated it has just entered into another Comprehensive Claims Settlement Agreement (i.e. James Bay type Agreement) with the Tlicho Dene people of the Northwest Territories, giving them fee simple title over land about twice the size of El Salvador. It is an interesting comparison, I had no idea what El Salvador's size was until I looked it up. I guess, the Canadian version would read 'the land is a little more than half the size of Prince Edward Island or 4,000 times the size of my backyard.' This would be the first land claim settlement since the Nisga'a Agreement was signed and important for both parties as the development of natural resources is impacting the Tlicho Dene traditional territories.

Sinclair praised the Second Session of the Permanent Forum. He said Canada views this as an important development in Indigenous issues in the international arena. Regarding the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Canada's position is that the language must be changed if it is to be adopted before the end of the International Decade of Indigenous People in 2004. Finally, Canada announced it will host the Special Rapporteur on the situation of the human rights and fundamental

To finish his presentation to the Working Group, Preston said that this James Bay Cree community (Nemaska) relocation should serve the world as an example of the positive influences of globalization.

freedoms of Indigenous people in 2004 for an official visit on the situation of Canada's indigenous peoples.

It was a surprise to hear the presentation of Richard Preston from the Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers), who spoke of the relocation of the community of Nemaska as a hall-

mark story of success and cooperation. It is not every day that one hears the name of a Cree community being presented in the UN. Richard Preston spoke of the roles of consultants as they helped but did not interfere with the community as it planned its relocation. This non-interference policy was to ensure that the people of Nemaska viewed the community plan as their own. He spoke of how Chief George Wapache told him in the year 2000 that out of the 119 items on the wish list they made in 1977 during the relocation that 105 have thus far been realized. The collaborative consultation process is one that seeks to bring information to the community to let them make more informed choices. To finish his presentation to the Working Group, Preston said that this James Bay Cree community relocation should serve the world as an example of the positive influences of globalization.

In the end, there were many presentations on the effects of globalization on Indigenous peoples from governments, UN organizations, NGOs, experts, and from Indigenous peoples attending the Working Group, including one from our own Romeo Saganash. The impacts on the Indigenous peoples carried a common theme of injustice, victimization and violations of Indigenous rights and lands. In some cases, this meant governments or corporations had armed groups making incursions into Indigenous lands to kill or forcibly remove Indigenous communities from areas where organizations had an interest in natural resource exploitation. It meant those peoples who were marginalized and impoverished in the world community, would no longer be neglected, they would be targeted because they sat on untapped and previously protected resources. On a positive note, organizations like the World Bank, which work in global trade and international banking, were listening and telling Indigenous peoples they were developing policies that would prevent money payments to projects, organizations or governments who impact



The Red Cross International Museum

Indigenous rights. The Working Group session ended as it began, with an Indigenous prayer for guidance and hope.

Geneva is a place of many fine restaurants and cafes catering to any of your culinary desires. So, with old friends and new ones, we chose different restaurants each night to dine at and discuss the many important issues that did not make the agenda. This is where you get a chance to know someone and understand their conviction for Indigenous issues and hear of the many strategies and fights they have been in on behalf of their people's rights or lands. It is in these discussions which often carry you over into closing time and beyond where you learn things you will never see in an article, meeting or classroom. You learn what it means to be Indigenous in different parts of the world.



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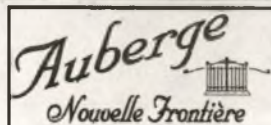
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# JUNIOR CANADIAN RANGERS FROM WEMINDJI VISIT CAMP IN ONTARIO



**By Sergeant Peter Moon**

Six Junior Canadian Rangers from Wemindji had such a good time at a Junior Canadian Ranger camp in Ontario they didn't want to go home.

"I'd like to stay longer," said Kristina Georgekish, 13. "This is fun. We've made lots of new friends."

The Junior Rangers from Wemindji are the first from Quebec to leave the province for advanced training. They spent five days at a camp on the Albany River, near Fort Albany, with other Cree Junior Rangers from the Ontario communities of Kashechewan, Fort Albany and Moose Factory.

They encountered some difficulties at first because of the different Cree dialects spoken on the Ontario side of James Bay but quickly adjusted and made friends, said Sergeant Regent Laplante, a Canadian Ranger instructor in Northern Quebec.

It was the second time Junior Canadian Rangers from both sides of James Bay have come together. During the summer, a group of Junior Rangers from Attawapiskat attended a camp on Ungava Bay for Junior Rangers from across Quebec. The Attawapiskat group made friends with Junior Rangers from Wemindji.

"We'd like to have more visits," said Major David Scandrett, who commands the Canadian Rangers in Northern Ontario.

"We hope we may be able to hold a joint exercise with Canadian Rangers in one of the Cree communities in Quebec this winter."

The Junior Rangers from Wemindji learned safe shooting techniques, using both rifles and shotguns, and obtained certificates from St. John Ambulance for proficiency in first aid and the Canadian Safety Council for operating power-assisted boats.

They did skeet shooting, practiced first aid on each other and with specially designed training models, were taught how outboard motors work, and learned how to operate a freighter canoe safely. They also had time for fishing, practicing their animal calls, playing various games and forging friendships.

The basic food for the camp was army field rations, supplemented by moose, caribou, goose and bannock, "as well as the ubiquitous Klik, of course," Major Scandrett said.

"Our group had a good time," said Ranger Abraham Matches of the Wemindji Canadian Ranger patrol. "I think this was a good thing for them to come here and meet young people from this side of the Bay. I'd like to see this happen more often."

It was the first time any of the Junior Rangers from Wemindji had been outside Quebec. The six were: Kristina Georgekish, 13; Geneva Sashaweskum, 13; Hilary Mark, 13; Darwin Visitor, 14; Damien Georgekish, 14; and Andy Matches, 12.

(Sgt. Moon is the public affairs Ranger for 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group at Canadian Forces Base Borden, Ont. [www.canadianrangers.ca](http://www.canadianrangers.ca).)



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The Cree Mineral Exploration Board was created as a result of the signed agreement (Paix de Braves) between the Cree Nation and the Quebec Government. A five year implementation agreement was signed for funding purposes between the Cree Regional Authority, Cree Mineral Exploration Board and the Quebec Government.

The main purposes of CMEB includes amongst others the following:

- 1) assist the Crees in accessing mineral exploration opportunities;
- 2) facilitate the development of mineral exploration activities by Cree Enterprises;
- 3) Facilitate and encourage the access by the Crees and Cree Enterprises to regular Quebec program funding and other encouragements for mineral exploration activities;
- 4) Act as an entry mechanism for offers of services by Crees and Cree Enterprises in the field of mineral exploration.

Furthermore and according to the Annual Program of Activities – CMEB (2003-2004), the board promotes, initiate and support training programs, and furnish assistance to job development, placement. The CMEB provides also geological and geosciences based expertise to the communities and the individual exploration. This includes guidance to the geosciences data and environmental impacts assessment.

If you are a Cree and are considering to submit a proposal to the CMEB please get in touch with the Chief Geologist Youcef Larbi in Wemindji at 819-978-0264 extension #327. The next meeting of the board is scheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

## A Pearl to be Discovered

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# BOUMDAADAOU: LET'S WALK

## Courage, Determination and Pain – The recipe for a 1,155 kilometre journey

by John Boudrias

**T**he Cree aboriginal community of Chisasibi is located on the Quebec shore of James Bay, at the mouth of the La Grande River, known as the source for the mega hydro-electricity installations that were built in the 1970s. It was on account of these hydroelectric dams, built by the provincial government, that the community faced its first of many challenges, as the community, originally on the Island of Fort George, had to move to the area, which now accommodates Chisasibi.

The Chisasibi Sports and Recreation Association (C.S.R.A.), made up of community members with interests in providing sporting and recreational activities for a youth demographic that desperately needs an alternative to the boredom and lack of recreational resources and programs that one would normally find in southern urban settings.

It has become apparent, as the community continues to grow and population levels soar at a rate higher than the national average, that new and expanded facilities are needed to help this community. It was determined that the construction of a sports complex, including the expansion of the existing arena and the construction of a new swimming pool, would be beneficial in continuing to provide for the recreational needs of today's and future generations.

It became the goal of the C.S.R.A. to organize a journey to attract financial support and attention to this much-needed and much-desired sports complex. The journey would cover the geographic area between the southern town of Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec, traveling through Val-d'Or, Amos, Matagami, and finally reaching the destination of Chisasibi – a distance totaling more than 1,150 kilometres. Even more astounding than the distance was the fact that the entire distance would be walked.

So, on October 1, 35 courageous and determined Cree of Chisasibi took their first steps out of the Rouyn-Noranda town limits, en route for a long, arduous journey to their homeland. Boumdaadaou (Let's Walk) was officially underway.

I was at the official departure, and spirits were high and excitement was in the air. It should be mentioned that the walkers were accompanied by, perhaps, another 20 helpers and elders, who were there to accompany, encourage, and work at the logistical aspects of the entire trip. Where eating establishments and lodging facilities did not exist, the helpers set up temporary camps and rest stops along the highway.

I caught up to the walkers on Monday, October 20, while they were staying at a workers' camp at kilometre marker 258 on the James Bay Highway. This area was on the shores of the mighty Rupert River.

Day 20 of their journey, and the exhaustion was quite apparent, but the look of determination on their faces was stronger than I had ever seen it.

I left my home in Ottawa that morning at 10 a.m. and drove all day until I arrived at the Rupert River at 9:30 p.m. that evening. I kept thinking about how tired I was when I reached the camp, but my realization that I was in my warm cozy truck, while the Boumdaadaou participants had faced the elements and had actually walked the road I was driving on, was more than enough inspiration to forget about my fatigue.

I was greeted by two of the accompanying elders, Janie and Josie Sam. They did not seem to believe that I had left Ottawa that morning, and was actually there to follow-up on my work. They immediately offered something to drink and eat, as our Elders always seem to do.

The camps were made up of trailer-style bunkhouses, so I knew, by the number of participants, that they had to be using at least two of the trailers. I asked the Elders where I would find the walkers, and to my amazement, I was told that they were still out on the highway... walking!

I witnessed the weary walkers' return at 11 p.m. that evening, later to be told that they were increasing their daily distances in order to arrive in Chisasibi on their goal date. Originally, Boumdaadaou was going to last until October 25, but with the combination of needed rest, healing of wounds related to walking, and refurbishing of logistical needs, the arrival date was pushed back, making it even a longer time away for the participants from their families, friends, jobs, and the comforts of home.

After a nice warm shower and a quick bite to eat, I was able to sit down with Reginald Sam, President of the C.S.R.A. and, in my opinion, the inspirational leader of Boumdaadaou. Mabel R. Napash, Ronnie Sealhunter, and Simeon Kitty also joined us, as we sat in a bunkhouse room for a quick meeting to talk about the walk and how things were going.

It did not take long for them to start talking about this incredible journey and the joys, and hardships one could expect. The look on their faces was like those of a firefighter after having battled a blaze for hours. Tired yet still ready for

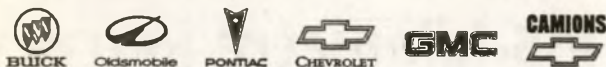




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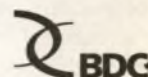
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# continued BOUMDAADAOU: LET'S WALK

*Courage, Determination and Pain – The recipe for a 1,155 kilometre journey*

more. Although the mood was generally good, there were also feelings of lonesomeness for families, tiredness, combined with an ever-present sore, aching, and burning feet. Keep in mind, they are averaging about 40 walked kilometres per day.

On the subject of physical condition, there are many health related injuries and problems that they have and continue to deal with, such as, common colds, swollen feet, sore throats, blisters, and twisted ankles.

Talking about the hardships only makes our walkers appreciate the good things that have happened along this journey even more. They speak of the appreciation they have for the people who they encounter along the journey. One person was from Vancouver, B.C., and he told them that he had seen coverage of Boumdaadaou on national television. There was a common and well-deserved sense of pride over that.

The walkers were very appreciative of the donors, sponsors, and mostly Crees from communities they went by along the way thus far, who have come out to make monetary donations and have brought food items and more to help them along the way.

It is mostly the strong words of encouragement that they welcome most, from vehicles passing by and honking their horns, shouting: "Don't give up!" They also really appreciate gestures from Cree community members meeting them while they walked through their territory. For example, while they walked through Waskaganish territory, William Hester and Raymond Blackned came out to support them and even supplied them with a spare tire needed for one of the accompanying vehicles.

In the beginning, the logistical needs involved with Boumdaadaou were difficult to sustain. At the start of the walk, it was a learning experience for all involved to meet the challenges of staying mentally focused, staying warm, and combating the cold, and sometimes harsh meteorological conditions. It was difficult to conserve their body temperature during lunch breaks and roadside stops.

As can be expected, there will be many tales to tell after the end of the journey has come. To date, one of the most inspiring incidents happened on October 19, when the Boumdaadaou caravan was greeted by members of their families, leaders of their community and other friends. Led by Chisasibi's local religious Minister, they held a special road-side service, followed by a meal, and special gathering, all around a bonfire at kilometre marker 252 of the James Bay Highway.

At this special gathering, the Boumdaadaou participants were reunited with their children and other family members. The visitors treated the walkers to a special presentation, by singing a hymn in their honour, appropriately titled Boumdaadaou, in which translated verses include: "every step you take will show you the path..." and "my home is a long ways away".

From the sense of accomplishment to the demonstration of human determination, all the participants will walk away from this experience with a new outlook and perspective of their lives. The latter is probably no better described than by a husband and wife who are participating as helpers. This couple suffered the loss a child in a recent, regionally well-known, car accident that claimed the lives of three Chisasibi community members.

The couple had shared with the participants that since the accident, they were unable to go through an entire day without crying. Somehow the walk, and the spiritual presence of so many determined souls, has helped them to cope with their grief. The power of the human spirit will always win in our personal struggles and battles.

There are demonstrations of the power of the human spirit all around these determined and brave walkers. They have come together when faced with the adversity of having their fellow walkers cry in foot pain. They have had a difficult time watching their fellow walkers struggle to finish the day's objective. They are not thinking about the finish line right now, as all they can think of at this moment is to take each day, one at a time, and take each step, one step at a time also.

They send a message to many as they approach the end of their journey. They give their thanks to all the people who have come out to encourage them, offer donations of money and food, and to all of those from other communities who have contributed funds to their new sports complex. For example, the other day, the Chief of Waswanipi, traveled to meet the walkers on-site, along the highway. At this meeting, the Chief, Robert Kitchen, announced that on behalf of his community, Waswanipi would contribute no less than \$10,000!

As I write, they are only a few days away from arrival in Chisasibi. Reginald Sam's objective was to arrive by October 30. On a personal note, I really hope they make it to Chisasibi as soon as possible, as before their departure in Rouyn-Noranda I witnessed them putting on their brand new walking shoes, only to have been astounded that on my visit the other day with a mere 400 kilometres to go, the shoes were so worn down that there was virtually no traction remaining on their soles.

Judging by the look of determination on the face of Reginald Sam and the others, I am encouraged that they will reach their destination by the goal date. Will Reginald Sam take the following days to celebrate his accomplishment? Likely not, as Reginald has already made plans to be in Val-d'Or the following day to be by his wife's side, as she will be having minor surgery.

I just hope he plans on driving or flying, but after seeing, and being impressed by his and all the walkers' determination, I wouldn't be surprised if he decided to walk!







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# RECLAIMED IMAGES

Glenna Matoush exhibit  
uses art to fight cultural appropriation

By Jennifer Westlake

In the heart of downtown Montreal, just where you would least expect it, you will find a colourful reminder that you can take an artist out of Eeyou Istchee, but you can't take Eeyou Istchee out of the artist.

If you are in town this month, now is your chance to see what Glenna Matoush has been up to recently. Matoush's colourful multimedia paintings are on exhibit throughout November at the Canadian Guild of Crafts at 1460 Sherbrooke St. West.

Although Matoush has been living and working in Montreal for the past 11 years, many of the works in the show were directly inspired by the people, events and culture of Eeyou Istchee. "Meant for... Ella" is a tribute to her late friend, Ella Saganash. The words "She walked Out" in Cree syllabics run along the frame of one large painting of three mitchuaps that commemorates her grand daughter's walking out ceremony in Waswanipi.

Other themes in Matoush's work address cultural and political concerns of First Nations people everywhere—cultural appropriation, for example. The "Transporting Shaman" series of small and large-scale works was started three years ago, after controversy erupted around the discovery near Collingwood, Ontario of ancient pictographs. Archaeologists argued that Vikings created these rock paintings, but the local Indians say that they are Native depictions of shaman transporting souls to the heavens. Matoush's response was to reclaim these ancient images in her own work. She has produced richly textured, colourful paintings that feature symbols found in the rock paintings: Vessels displaying the symbols found in the pictographs are built up with layers of birch bark and surrounded by swirls of luminously colourful beads.

Three pieces in the "Transporting Shaman" series stand out in stark contrast to the warm colours and textures of the majority of the works. These more abstract paintings in black, white and flecks and streams of blue come from what Matoush refers to as her "dark period." Sad news from her old home of Mistissini led her to create these layered, glossy, dark images. At her

opening, Matoush explained that the blue forms in these pieces are meant to convey the sense of souls being carried away by water. These thin slivers and wider rivers of sky blue prevent these paintings from being overwhelmingly sombre. Even when dealing with serious or sad events, Matoush injects her paintings with a positive sensitivity that gives them a comforting aura.

Now a prolific painter, Matoush actually started out as a print maker. Having studied printmaking at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Guilde Graphique, she used this to set up a makeshift studio in her kitchen in Mistissini, with her etching plate set on top of an open cutlery drawer and her acid bath on the counter. In 1987 Matoush built with her own hands a studio as an addition to her log cabin. Then, in the summer of 1990, she attended a ten-day painting workshop led by Pierre Leon Tetrault. "We were working outside. I was making a painting every day. We used so much canvas they had to order more." Matoush fondly remembers that she brought 10-year-old nephew Kevin Mianscum with her. He turned out to be the most avant-garde of all the participants, jumping into abstract painting right from the get go. "The paint was flying all over!" At one point she turned around to find him covered head to toe in black paint. "I told him to go jump in the lake to get cleaned up." In 1992, she left Mistissini to embark on her career as a painter in Montreal.

For those who can't jump on a plane and head down to Montreal, worry not. Within the next year or so you will be able to see a fine example of Matoush's work in Mistissini at the Hotel Museum. She has been commissioned to produce an 8 by 30-foot mural. "The Wall of Personalities" will depict local community members of the past and present.

You can also check out Matoush's work on the web at [www.creeculture.ca](http://www.creeculture.ca).

Glenna Matoush, *Works on Paper and Canvas at the Canadian Guild of Crafts from October 31 to November 29. 1460 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite B, Montreal. Ph: (514) 849-6091*







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# UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY FOR THE BIRDS

by Xavier Kataquapit



**O**n a grey, fall afternoon my friends and I are bundled up in warm clothes and wandering the community. We are ten year old boys playing out an ancient tradition our ancestors have acted out on a regular basis and one that is common throughout the world. We are hunting.

We are carrying slingshots made from the branches of small bushes that grow in the community. During the warmer summer months we have taken our time gathering the perfectly Y-shaped pieces of branch to create our slingshots. In the spring and summer, we played in the bush behind the local school and also by the Hudson Bay store. The bush areas were great places to meet our friends, where we would then hide under the thick foliage and spy on people as they walked along the road.

While playing our games we were always on the lookout for the perfect Y-shaped branch to make a slingshot. The piece of wood had to be strong with a thick central shaft for the handle and two smaller branches to which the slings would be fastened.

When someone found the perfect branch it was quickly snapped near its base to preserve the Y-shaped branch. It was important to grab the valuable piece of wood right away before someone else could claim it. I remember finding many of these special branches of wood and transporting them home so that I could transform them into weapons. My parents did allow me to use sharp objects when I was young but I have to admit that from time to time I snuck an axe and knife out to cut out my slingshot.

Even as young boys my friends and I were resourceful and could easily find substitutes for what we needed. The sling could be made out of anything that was rubber, strong and durable. Some of my friends used a series of rubber bands tied end to end, then doubled or tripled over to make a sling. Others cut out old rubber tubes from car, truck or bicycle tires as a sling substitute. I remember one boy who used about a hundred of his sister's small brightly coloured rubber hair bands to make his sling. I guess he was a little unpopular at home for a while. There were a few lucky boys who actually purchased manufactured tube shaped rubber slings from the Hudson Bay Store.

To finish my project I asked mom for a piece of hide which she cut into an oval shape with two small holes for the rubber slings. To complete my sling, I used thin string to secure the rubber to the Y-shaped handle then to the hide. After some practice and a few adjustments the sling was ready to hurl small stones at unsuspecting targets. As soon as my parents discovered I had created my own slingshot, they were quick to warn me about its dangers and they threatened to take it away if I used it irresponsibly.

By the time we gathered our materials and completed our slingshots it was fall, which was a perfect time for bird hunting. I was never an accurate shot with my sling. The birds seemed to be too small a target to hit. One day I witnessed a friend kill a small bird with his sling and it occurred to me that it seemed a waste. I think I realized early on that this was just not for me. Some of my fellow hunters fed the dead birds to their dogs. Others even tried plucking, cleaning, gutting and cooking them at home to eat. Have you ever tried fried chickadees? Me neither.

It was only later on that I discovered that our playful activity was in fact a method of survival in the recent past. Dad explained that he and his brothers hunted with slingshots as young boys on the banks of the river in search of small birds for food. They used slingshots similar to what we built for play but theirs were much more serious weapons. Dad explained that during times of famine and when ammunition could not be afforded people used this method of hunting to kill all sorts of small game and birds to feed themselves. So, just think of it, back in about 1950 while so many in the south were dining on big meals every day some of my people were having to resort to hunting in the most primitive ways just to stay alive.

Even though my friends and I never really brought anything home, we were happy just to be out in the cool fall air. I really am amazed when I think about my dad's story of surviving on the land. I realize now why my parents and elders encouraged this activity. It was a skill that had helped them survive during hard times not so long ago. It was a bit of knowledge they were happy to pass down just in case we ever fell on hard times again.



## November 14, 2003



# CLASSIFIEDS

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## OYE, OYE.... DO YOU LOVE THE NATION?

Dear readers, we are preparing the Nation's 10th Anniversary special issue and would love to get feedback from you. Send us your message and share your thoughts (good or bad) about the Nation. And watch for this special issue on November 28th 2003.

## 100 - BIRTHS

**Congratulations to Miranda** Georgekish and Harry Atsynia on the birth of their baby girl on October 13th, 2003. I hear she's a chubby one...lol...like you eshh. Well con-grads again and Miranda a.k.a Box...lol...give her kisses for moi....Love LDA

## 101 - BIRTHDAYS

**Birthday wishes going out to my** friends in Whapmagoostui. Joanne Kawapit (Nov.16) Diana Natachequan (Nov. 15) and Alison Petagumskum (Nov.9). In North Bay Robert Kawapit (Nov.3) and Malu (Nov.5). Joanne and Diana,

Have fun at the social club. Alison, may you get what you wish for on your birthday. Robert have fun with us at the Zoo Nite Club. Manuel have fun partying. Happy Birthday guys from Lorianne in North Bay.

**Happy 1st Birthday** to my little nephew from Waskaganish, Deshawn Davis on November 1st. Hope you'll have a big and a good birthday feast, with moose ouu-jaad...lol... and mostly, keep up with the good work you're doin.. Making your mommy clean-up, so she'll lose weight...lol..i'm jokin Cynthia!! Have a good one again Deshawn boy'sh. With lots of Hugs & Kisses.Love your auntie \*Duda\* in Montreal.

**To my special one** and only brother JP Wapachee in Nemaska, how are you doing over there...just wanted to wish you a happy belated birthday! I miss you and your family, I think about all of you daily wherever I am. Kiss Jacie and Kaylen for me! Take care of yourselves. See you soon, luv Cel

**Happy 1st Birthday** to my little nephew from Waskaganish, Deshawn Davis on November 1st.

**Happy Birthday** to our sister Karen Kakabat, on Nov. 6th. Sis...On the day we celebrate the day you came into this world, is the

day we celebrate the moment you came into my lives. When we think about the people that mean a lot to us, our thoughts always turn to you. Just knowing you're there and that you care makes our worlds a happier place. Have a Wonderful Birthday!! We Love you, from your sisters, Stephanie, Lorraine and Tara (Wemindji)

**Happy 4th Birthday** to a little guy who means a lot to us! CAMERON GILPIN you've grown so much, that your head is getting bigger too (or maybe it's because you tell us you have an 8 year old brain), lol. We love you so much... xoxox... From all of us at 48 Harricanaw St. (Wask)

**Birthday greetings** to Alice R. Matthew in Chisasibi. It is such a blessing to have you as the mom of our dearest grandson -Tyson-John, the handsome and strong boy that you brought into this world. We want to wish you from the bottom of our hearts, a very happy belated birthday and hope you enjoyed your b-day with your mom and your family. I know things haven't been great for all of us lately, but you must understand and know that we only do things in trying to show that we love and care for you and want nothing but the best for our grandson and you. You are truly a great mom to "BOY" and

you always try to things whats best for Joe and Boy and we cannot seem to understand sometimes...Hmmm.GRAND-PARENTS!!!!.... What do they know, eh!! Anyway, we hope you enjoyed your special day and hope you have many more b-days! We hope to see you and boy very soon! Happy Birthday, Alice!! Oh, by the way, we miss that little boy sooooo muchhhh!!!! P.S. Lots of hugs and Kisses to our dear grandson, Tyson-John, the handsomest boy at our Goose Camp and at Fire Lake!!!!Smile.Boyumanan!!! Luv ya! From JB Loon and Laurie Loon.

**When you came** into this world, you not only changed our lives, but also brought happiness, laughter and love in our family and home. You brought joy and created kindness and also brought our family together. That is why we cannot seem to let you go even to visit your other grandparents in Chisasibi. I thank the Lord for the special love you created with grandma Laurie and it is such a joy to see this knowing grandma always wanted a baby girl in the house. Happy 1st Birthday! - Ja-Jades!! May the Good Lord watch over you on your birthday and for always. From Grandpa JB Loon and Grandma Laurie Loon

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## CLASSIFIEDS

We would like to say a Happy Birthday to Adamie Mathias J.R. from waswanipi on November 10th, 2003. Hey AJ we are sorry, that we couldn't be there on your birthday, to watch you blow out your 2 candles... aight... Hope you'll have fun on your birthday.... Once again **HAPPY BIRTHDAY AJ....** we love you and we miss you alot.... XoXoXoXo And many more Birthdays to come. FR: Auntie & Uncle SMS & ES (Wemindji)

We would like to say a Happy Birthday to Jaime Matoush. On November 3rd, 2003. Hey gurl it was your Birthday, and once again **HAPPY BIRTHDAY....** And many more to come... XoXoXoXo Fr: SMS & ES

We would like to say a Happy Belated Birthday to our Godchild Timothy Matoush J.R. On November 1st. From Wemindji. Once again **HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY** to you. And many more to come... We love you very much Fr: SMS & ES

We would like to wish a happy belated birthday to our mom, Anna Bosum on Oct. 21 We love you so much that is unexplainable, you've always be there for us and you never judged us even when we make mistakes. Your love has enabled us to be strong and love and respect others. You've been an inspiration to all of us. We know your neverending prayers. We feel

it in our hearts. Your prayers will be answered some day. We love you, from Antonio, Cecilia, Weena, Harry, Emily, Karen, Dan, Will, Thomas, Naomi, Lilybelle.

"I would like to wish a Happy Birthday to Anthony on November 9. This day is your special day and I hope you have lots of fun. I will see you soon... Lottss of love Mel"

I would like to wish my son Antonio Jake Otter a happy 6th birthday. His birthday is on November 8th. I miss you son, and i'll come and see you on your big day. Love Daddy-O. Sherman Salt.

To a very special person in the whole world, Lucassie Kudler. We wish you a very special day on your birthday on November 27th. We want you to have a Happy Day that day. We miss you very very much. We wish you were home all the time. Take care of yourself ok. Love you. From Mom Louise and Dad George.

We would like to wish a Happy Birthday to Job Mastly on Nov. 7th and a Happy 1st Birthday to Williana Mastly on Nov. 13th, to Marta M. Scipio on Nov. 21st and Steven Mastly Sr. on Nov. 27th. Wishing you all the best on your special day. From Rebecca, David Terrell, Robin & Kayla Kawapit.

### 300 - PERSONALS

We would like to send a birthbay

wish to our beautiful granddaughter (1 year old) - Hailie-Jade Wabaquin Neacappo-Loon Her 1st birthday was November 2nd, 2003. Dearest granddaugh-

ter, we thank the Lord for giving us such an adorable and beautiful granddaughter like you and wish you many more birthdays.

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AVIS RAPPLI ET BONÉ: LAURA MOSES

A: Chisasibi le 9 Octobre 2003 Lauradisa



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
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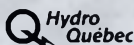
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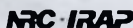
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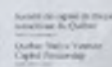
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**The Cree Board of Health & Social Services of James Bay**

*What can you do to prevent Diabetes?*  
*Here are a few tips on Diabetes Prevention:*

Physical activity will burn the extra energy stored in your body. Physical activity can mean walking 30 minutes every day or at least five times a week. Take a walk with your spouse, grandparent, a family member, a friend or even your dog. Walk to work instead of driving. Fast walking is the simplest and best exercise you can do to lose weight, keep your body healthy and working properly.

Your body is like a ski-doo. If you are not careful how you treat it, it will eventually break down. You need to eat traditional and healthy foods for your body to function properly. Make small changes in your eating habits. For example: eat smaller portions; eat Eeyou miichim instead of poutine, Kik or other processed food; choose a fruit instead of potato chips or chocolate; roast or boil food instead of frying; drink water, natural or unsweetened juices or diet pop instead of regular pop, Kool-Aid or Tang.

Not all overweight people have Diabetes, but the excess weight significantly increases your risk of getting Diabetes. By losing only a few pounds (10 to 20 pounds over one or two years) you can significantly decrease your risk of getting Diabetes. If you are interested in losing weight, you can make an appointment at your local health clinic to discuss this.

The most important part of any successful Diabetes program is the community. Work with your community to create a Community Diabetes Task Force. This group can organize support groups, cooking classes, store tours, physical activities, school activities, community activities and other events. Nothing will happen if you do not get involved in your own community and take responsibility for action.

Stress is part of life. Too much stress can lead to the body breaking down. Learn to reduce stress by living a balanced lifestyle. Take time to play and enjoy yourself. Being physically active is the best way to reduce stress.

Information about Diabetes is available at your health clinic and the CHR's office. Diabetes is a preventable disease. The more you learn about good eating habits, physical activity and healthy living, the easier it is for you to make the right and healthy choices. If someone in your family is living with Diabetes, educate yourself and live a healthier lifestyle with them.

Diabetes is a silent disease. It is possible to have Diabetes for 10 years and not know about it. Medical professionals say for every person diagnosed with Diabetes, there is one other person out there who is not aware they have Diabetes. Early diagnosis of Diabetes can delay or prevent complications of Diabetes. It is very important to get tested for Diabetes. To do this, you must call your health clinic and make an appointment.

Diabetes is a leading cause of death by disease. Left untreated or improperly managed, high levels of blood sugar associated with Diabetes can slowly damage the small and large blood vessels in the body, resulting in a variety of complications:

- Heart attack or strokes
- Kidney disease and failure
- Blindness
- Lower limb amputations (toes, feet, legs)
- Impotence

With careful management and early diagnosis of Diabetes, these complications can be delayed, controlled and even prevented.

**For more information on Diabetes Prevention, please contact your local health clinic or visit [www.creeddiabetes.com](http://www.creeddiabetes.com)**

